

High Friends in Low Places

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Summary: A redoing of the How to Train Your Dragon episode, "When Lightning Strikes". When the vikings believe that Toothless is to blame for Thor's anger, Stoick tells Hiccup to take the dragon and run. During their escape, Toothless is struck by lightning. By the next morning, Hiccup and his friend wash up on the outskirts of a jungle.

High Friends in Low Places

Thanks for reading. Hope you like it. Please review.

* * *

><p>Living with dragons has its ups and its downs. You need to stay calm, keep a clear head. Which is not always easy with Vikings.<p>

My dad, Gobber, and I stared out of the open door at the storm that was raging outside. It wasn't raining at all, but lightning was striking everywhere. It appeared to be bouncing off the metal perches and landing on our houses, setting fire to them.

Storms like this didn't normally happen in Berk and the Vikings were starting to get anxious.

Thanks to Mildew, they have been blaming Thor's anger on Toothless, saying that Thor doesn't approve of the dragon living in town anymore.

If this didn't end soon, my dad would have no choice. Rather he believed that the dragon was the cause of these storms or not, the other villages would take it upon themselves to see it through.

Toothless would have to leave the island.

There was no way I was going to let that happen.

"Unbelievable," I mumbled, "even more lightning than the last storm."

"I don't understand," Gobber complained, as we closed the door behind us. "We gave Thor a giant statue."

It was a very small house. In the center of the room we had a fire going to keep the place warm during the storm. You could see the small kitchen in the back of the house and the eating table. We didn't need a lot of space for our kitchen because all of the Viking usually ate together in the Great Hall.

My dad's bed was up a step, against the wall to the right. The ground floor also contained a couple chairs that were spread randomly around the room. To the left there was a flight of stairs that led up to my room. All that room contained was my bed, a desk, and Toothless's granite bed.

"It was a gallant effort son," my dad said as he stepped farther into the room, "but it looks as though this is not what Thor wanted."

We heard the lightning strike again outside and Gobber quickly scooted away from the Night Fury. Toothless and I gave him a questioning looks. He wasn't starting to believe this rumor about Toothless, was he?

"Gobber, what are you doing?" I asked, hoping that he wasn't going to turn on us.

"I love Toothless," he admitted with a shrug, "I'm just airing on the side of caution."

Toothless turned to face me and whimpered, shifting his front paws nervously.

"Hey, don't worry bud. I'm not going to let anything happen to you," I murmured to him, as I rubbed the dragon's head, trying to calm my friend. I then turned to Gobber before raising my voice to add, "No matter what some people think!"

The hours started to slowly pass by.

Toothless had been nervously moving around our house, making small whimpering noises. I hated to see my friend like this, but I didn't know what else to do to reassure him that everything was going to be fine. Eventually, he did lie down by the fire, but the poor guy still seemed restless.

It wasn't long before we could hear the Vikings gathering outside. We could clearly make out Mildew's voice yelling above the gathering crowd.

"I told you what he wants and we haven't given it to him! Until we rid this island of that Night Fury, Thor's fire will continue to rain down upon us!"

Toothless let out another sad meowing noise. I knelt down beside him

and rubbed his head, hoping my presence would make him relax. The louder the voices got from the people gathering outside, the more restless the dragon seemed to get.

My dad was slowly passing back and forth. As he walked by for about the hundredth time, I turned to ask him, "Y-you don't really think that Thor is angry because of Toothless, do you?"

"Of course I don't."

Just then, there was a pounding on the door. We all turned towards the entrance in time to hear the slightly muffled voice of Mildew through the wood saying, "Open up Stoick. We've come for the Night Fury!"

"But I'm afraid they do," my dad added almost to himself, before speaking over his shoulder to me. "Get Toothless to a safe place. I'll try to reason with them."

It would just be my dad and Gobber against the rest of Berk. What was he going to do? Did he really think that he would be able to calmly speak to a group of frightened villagers and get them to see that this whole idea was crazy?

They were scared! There was no way they would actually listen to him. Not with everything going on right now.

My dad started to head for the door, but I grabbed his arm before he could open it.

"But . . ." I tried to tell him that it would be crazy to try, but he put one of his giant hands on my slim shoulder to stop me.

"Just go!"

I hoped he knew what he was doing.

I turned around to find Gobber approaching Toothless. At least he seemed to have gotten past this whole idea about Toothless being a danger to the town.

"Safe travels, old friend," Gobber said, before I gestured to my friend to head up the stairs. We were going to head out by the window in my room.

I held onto Toothless as we made the jump from the roof to the ground together. In our haste to get out of the building we landed awkwardly, causing quite a bit of noise.

Holding my breath, I glanced around the corner of the building towards the front door. Luckily, with the storm and all of the noise they were making, the group of Vikings didn't appear to have heard our departure.

Letting out the air I had been holding with a sigh of relief, I turned my attention to Toothless who still appeared frightened about the turn of events.

I thought back over everything that we had accomplished together. We took down the Red Death, showed the village that dragons and humans

could live in peace, and so much more just in the last year. We've had to deal with Mildew's crazy plots of trying to rid the town of dragons before. We got through it all because we had each other and I knew that this time wouldn't be any different.

I wasn't going to let anything happen to my best friend. I wasn't going to let him get hurt.

"Don't worry, bud," I said, putting a hand on his nose. "It's you and me."

He made a soft meow noise. I took that as a sign of trust and headed off in the direction of the woods, with Toothless close behind.

I didn't want the crowd to see us taking off. I didn't want them to see what direction we were going to be heading in. Better to get some distance between them and us first.

We hadn't gotten far when I saw Astrid watching us in the shadows of her house. She gestured for Toothless and I to come over.

We really shouldn't be here much longer. Especially not out in the open with an angry group of Vikings after us.

I glanced back towards my house. From this angle we could clearly see the group talking to Gobber and my dad. If just one of them turned around they would surely spot us. We had to keep moving.

That was what I was planning to do, before I could turn back to face Astrid, Toothless took off in that direction to say his goodbyes. I ran after him, not just to explain to the girl what was going on, but also to get out of the immediate view of the mob.

After pulling Toothless off of Astrid, I quickly explained to her what had happened at my house and that my dad had told me to get Toothless somewhere safe.

"We can hide Toothless in the cove for now," Astrid said, trying to be helpful to our situation, but I knew that wasn't going to be good enough.

"They'll just find him. No, we have to leave."

"We?" she questioned.

"He can't make it on his own," I answered, turning towards Toothless and then back to the girl, "and I wouldn't want him to. I'm going with him, Astrid."

The look on Astrid's face fell, "But you'll come back, right?"

"Yeah, eventually, when they all realize that this didn't happen because of Toothless."

Astrid looked at us with an expression of worry. There was a moment of silence where I thought she was going to say something.

Astrid had kissed me a couple times in the past. Once was right after I took her for a ride on Toothless for the first time, and then again

when I had woken up after the battle with the Red Death. According to the smile she had given me that day, I really thought that our relationship was going to change after that.

My feelings for Astrid grew into a crush over the years and I thought she was finally returning those emotions, but nothing had happened yet. We hadn't kissed again since that day.

I have wanted to ask her about it, and who knows how long I will be gone this time? If I didn't say something now, I knew I would regret it.

I opened my mouth, trying to speak the words that would hopefully take our friendship to the next level, but the words were stuck in my mouth.

The cries of the crowd were getting louder . . . closer. We didn't have much time left.

"You better go . . . " she said sadly.

I nodded, and with that I turned to get on my dragon and we took off.

I never thought that Toothless would get into a situation like this, so I never planned on an escape route for the two of us. I had no idea where to go. I just let Toothless lead the way. Maybe he knew somewhere we could lay low for a few days.

I knew the idea of Toothless being the cause of Thor's angry was crazy, but I had to admit that it was odd for the lightning to be hitting this close to Toothless even now. As we got farther and farther away from Berk, the storm did seem to be following us.

I shook my head trying to banish those thoughts from my head.

This had nothing to do with my dragon. There was no reason for the gods to be mad at him. The Night Fury had done so much to help the people of Berk. Why would he suddenly be a problem now? It made no sense and I hated myself for doubting my friend even for a second.

Time seemed to pass slowly as we continued on our journey.

As we flew out across the water, the thunder and lightning continued to strike. Toothless would screech in fright whenever the lightning passed by us.

Out of the corner of my eyes, I saw the flash of what I assumed was another lightning strike coming down behind us and Toothless gave out another cry as we were suddenly falling.

I tried to hold onto the dragon as we rapidly started to lose altitude.

"Toothless!" I cried out, as my hands slipped off of the dry and scaly exterior.

Next thing I knew, we had both plunged through the surface of the ocean. I sank like a stone as the taste of salt filled my mouth. The

freezing water stung my skin and I tried to kick my way to the surface. It was a slow progress due to the cold liquid that had instantly numbed my body. My lungs were quickly filling with water. The salt water was stinging my eyes. I seemed to be moving in slow motion and my arms were quickly getting tired. I was struggling for air.

I wasn't going to make it . . .

A dark figure moved above me and I felt a tug on my shirt.

As we broke to the surface, Toothless let go of me and I reached behind him to put my arms around the top of his neck as I coughed up water, trying to get clean air into my lungs.

Toothless made a meowing sound as he turned his head to try and look at me.

"I'm okay bud," I managed to get out between gasps for air.

When I was finally able to breathe again, I pulled myself onto the dragon and stretched my legs out down his back to try to get out of the cold water as much as possible. My arms were folded on top of his head and I looked down at the Night Fury.

"You okay, bud?"

He made a gurgling sound as he struggled a little to keep his head above the water.

Suddenly, I was very tired. I rested my head down on my arms and before I knew it I was asleep.

A couple hours passed when Toothless woke me with a bark.

"Huh," I rubbed my eyes, trying to wake up. "What is it?"

He made the barking noise again.

I looked up to see the sun starting to slowly rise in the distance and sat up straight on the back of my friend.

Seeing the light rising on the horizon, I felt like things were finally turning around. This feeling was not just brought on by the sight of the sun that was now appearing in the distance, but for what could now be seen in the warm glimmer of sunlight.

"Land!"

Hearing my excitement, Toothless paddled faster to the image in the distance.

When the water was only about knee deep, I jumped off of Toothless's back and walked the rest of the way to the coastline. I pulled myself up and over the rocks that were along the shore and flopped onto my back on the soft grass.

I let out a sigh of relief as Toothless approached. He shook the excess water off of him like a dog, soaking me again.

"Toothless!" I complained as I sat up.

He gave me an, 'I'm sorry' look and I smiled at him, placing my hand on his nose to let him know it was okay.

My eyes then drifted down towards the dragon's tail fin. The fabric was gone and the metal bars that were used to hold it into place were bent. "That must be where the lightning struck," I said, thinking out loud. We wouldn't be able to go anywhere until I got that fixed.

Looking past Toothless, down the coast, I saw a building. One wooden building, surrounded by trees . . . and people! There were people moving around outside, carrying boxes from the dock to the building.

Maybe they would have room for us to stay in.

My stomach growled at the prospect of food. Toothless was probably starving by now, too.

"Come on, Toothless," I said as I got to my feet. "Let's see if they can help us."

We made our way around the trees and bushes covering the landscape. It was a slow process. The scenery seemed to be covered in roots and vines. I had to keep my eyes on the ground to keep myself from tripping over something.

I knew we were getting close when I started to hear voices.

"Did you hear that?"

"Hear what?"

"Something moved."

The voices stopped and I assumed they were listening for our approach. I took another step and a twig snapped under my foot.

A man's voice cried out again. "There it is again!"

I stopped. I didn't want to frighten the guys, but Toothless seemed to have another idea.

He crouched down behind the last bush that was blocking us from view of the men. I knew what he was going to do. Before I could stop him, the dragon sprang through the bushes and branches, baring his teeth playfully.

The two men didn't find it very funny.

"AHH!"

I pushed my way through the thicket to find the men screaming and hugging each other.

"Toothless! Stop!" I ordered, as I hurried around and put my hands on his head. "Sorry," I said, turning towards the men who were still hugging each other in terror. "He's . . . not usually like

this."

The chubby one with black hair spoke up. "What is he?" He cocked his head to the side, studying the black beast from a distance.

"I've never seen anything like him," agreed the other one, bravely taking a step closer. He was taller than the other man and skinner.

Toothless and I gave each other a questioning look. His ears were standing up on his head and he was staring at us with wide eyes.

"This is Toothless," I said, introducing him. "He's a Night Fury."

The chubby one raised an eyebrow. "Night Fury?"

Big, wide smiles appeared on both of their faces. Those bright smiles looked so natural on their faces I assumed that was how they usually carried themselves.

"He sure is different," added the skinny one. He leaned his head to one side, studying the creature.

"Strange looking," the other agreed, finally stepping forward to get a better look.

I narrowed my eyes at them. "He's a dragon," I answered. Don't they have dragons here?

"Dragon?" the skinny one turned to question his friend.

The other raised both of his eyebrows in amazement. "They're real?" he asked.

I shook my head. This wasn't getting us anywhere.

"My name's Hiccup." I introduced myself.

"Hiccup?" The skinny one turned to look at his friend. "Strange name."

The other one added, "Sure is . . . but so is Toothless."

"I'm Hooft," said the skinny one, turning back to me, "and this is Hugo," he added, as he put a hand on his friend's shoulder.

These two sure made quite a pair.

"Nice to meet you both," I said. "We could use some help."

The one named Hooft grinned at me. "Sure."

"What'd you need?" added the other, smiled at me.

"Place to stay for a couple nights?"

Hooft turned to look back at the building behind them. "I'm afraid we can't help you there," he said, turning back to me.

"A ship just got in yesterday," added Hugo. "All our rooms are taken."

I sighed and turned to Toothless. Now what?

One of the men spoke up then. "Hey, maybe Tarzan can help."

"Tarzan?" I asked, turning back to them.

"The jungle man," said Hooft.

Hugo beamed at me. "Great guy!"

"I'm sure he'd help you out."

Hugo turned slightly to Hooft and gestured in his direction. "He saved us once."

"More than once," Hooft corrected, elbowing his friend.

"Okay, and where would I find Tarzan?" I asked.

Hooft used a hand to gesture to the trees behind us. "Why, in the jungle of course."

"He lives with his wife," added Hugo.

"In a tree house," Hooft continued.

I placed a hand on Toothless's head. "Can you guys take us to him?"

"Sure."

"No problem."

"We just need to take this to the trading post," Hugo said, heading towards a rectangle shaped crate that I hadn't noticed until now. Hooft followed him over to help.

Each of them grabbed a side and heaved it up off the ground, slowly making their way towards the building that they had called the trading post.

Toothless and I followed behind.

They set the crate down outside of the door just as another man was stepping out of the building. This guy was taller than the other two.

"Hey, boss," Hugo greeted the man.

Hooft put his hand on the crate before adding. "This is the last of them."

"Good . . ." he turned to stare at Toothless, "and what is that?"

"Oh, that's Toothless," said Hugo.

"Night Fury," added Hooft.

"I'm Hiccup," I said, "We need a place to stay for a couple nights."

"Hiccup?" The man stared at me questioningly. "Well, I'm Renard Dumont, owner," He said, raising a hand to gesture at the building behind him. "I'm afraid we don't have any rooms available right now."

Hugo jumped in then. "That's what we said."

"We told him," added Hooft.

"They said Tarzan might be able to help us," I said. It had been a long night. I was getting tired and hungry. I just wanted to find this Tarzan guy and get some rest.

"Tarzan?" he seemed to be thinking hard about the guy. Finally he said, "Yes. Hugo, Hooft, you know where to find Tarzan. You want to take him?"

"Sure."

"Love to."

"Let's go."

Hugo and Hooft walked past me and started up the hill that led into the jungle, with Toothless close behind them.

I watched as Dumont smiled at us and turned back to his other workers. I wasn't sure what, but something seemed off about the guy. I let it go for now and hurried to catch up with the others.

As we headed farther into the jungle, Hugo and Hooft continued to talk about who knows what. I tuned them out and looked around at the trees that seemed to tower over us.

Up in the trees, I saw what I first thought were vines wrapped around many of the branches. Most were just plants, but as we grew closer, I realized some of them were snakes. They hissed at us as we passed. I jumped slightly at the sight of them.

I could hear birds chirping somewhere, but when I raised my head to look for them I couldn't find them. I figured they were hiding in the trees, out of view.

I did see monkeys as they jumped from tree to tree over our heads, screeching at each other.

Looking straight up, I could just make out some light as the sun tried to shine through the dense cover of leaves.

On the ground, there were plants everywhere, all different. Some had big leaves that were bending backwards, some with giant flowers all over it, and some with thorns.

Another thing I noticed was the heat. In Berk, it was pretty much winter all through the year. It was a lot hotter here. Sweat was already starting to run down my forehead.

Everything looked the same out here. How did these two know where they were going? I really hoped that they weren't just going to get us lost.

"Tarzan!"

"Huh," I turned my gaze back to the two men in front of us.

The chubby one turned back to look at me, "We're almost to the tree house."

"Tarzan!" Hooft shouted again.

We moved around a huge tree, and there it was. It was a huge house with a deck and there was a boat tied up in the corner.

"Wow," I said under my breath.

"Hey Tarzan! You here?"

A muscular man with long brown hair suddenly sprinted on his hands and bare feet across the deck. He jumped over the railing and grabbed hold of a vine. His hands seemed to glide smoothly down the plant due to years of practice. As he approached, I noticed that the man was dressed in nothing but a loincloth.

"Hugo! Hooft!" he said, greeting his friends.

"Tarzan!" greeted Hugo.

"What's up nature boy?" Hooft asked.

Having spotted Toothless and me, the man ignored his friend's question and approached us.

Toothless let out a warning growl as the man drew near. I placed my hand on his neck, silently telling him that everything was okay.

The Ape Man paused in his advance and cautiously sniffed in our direction.

"What is it?" he asked, cocking his head to the side.

"It's a Night Fury," answered Hooft.

"A dragon," added Hugo.

The man looked up at me. "I've read about dragons. Jane told me they were a myth."

"Jane?" I asked.

"My wife."

"Tarzan, this is Hiccup and Toothless," Hooft said, introducing us. "They need some help."

Hugo started to march back the way we had come. "Yeah, but we need to get back to work," he announced. "Don't want to anger the boss. Common Hooft!"

"Catch you later, Tarzan," waved Hooft, and they were gone, leaving Toothless and I alone with the Ape Man.

"You need help?" Tarzan asked.

"Yeah," I turned away from the area where the two strange men had just disappeared and faced Tarzan. "We need a place to stay for a couple nights."

"Is something wrong?"

I looked down at my dragon, trying to think of the right words. How was I going to explain everything that had happened to us to this man?

I lightly bit my lip before starting my story. "The people in my village are angry at Toothless," I started. "Thor, one of our gods, has been sending terrible thunder storms to our village. Lightning was hitting everywhere, houses catching on fire . . . Storms like that only happen when Thor's mad. They think that the gods don't want him in Berk anymore. They want to take Toothless away." I scratched the top of the dragon's head and looked up into Tarzan's eyes. "He's my best friend. I can't let them separate us!" I paused before continuing. "My dad is talking to the other Vikings. He's trying to reason with them, but until things calm down back home, we can't be there."

Tarzan looked back at the tree house behind him. "Well, you are welcome to stay here until things are better for you at home."

I raised my eyebrows in surprise. "Really?" I didn't think it was going to be that easy.

"Sure," he said, turning his eyes towards Toothless, "You and your friend will be safe here."

"Thanks!"

Tarzan approached the dragon, placing his hand on his head.

The sudden contact from the unfamiliar person spooked Toothless. He bared his teeth in a growl and crouched, ready to spring if necessary.

Tarzan quickly backed off a couple steps, clearly worried that he had done something wrong.

I moved in front of Toothless and placed both of my hands on his head. "Toothless! Stop! It's okay!"

The dragon seemed to calm down a little, but he still bared his teeth in a warning.

"What happened?" asked Tarzan.

Keeping my hands on Toothless, I turned so I could see him. "He just doesn't know you," I explained. "Back home, Vikings and dragons have been at war with each other for hundreds of years." I stole a glance at Toothless before continuing. "When me and Toothless became friends, I knew that we didn't have to kill them. It took my dad a while to see that, but things have changed now. Humans and dragons now live in peace . . . at least in Berk."

Tarzan seemed to think this over. "So . . . Toothless doesn't trust me."

I nodded and smiled. He was catching on quick. "Yeah . . . yeah, it's all about trust."

He tilted his head to the side. "What do I have to do?"

"Here, come a little closer," he moved over on his hands and feet. "Now, stretch your arm out, palm facing Toothless." He made the gesture. I started to step aside, leaving one hand on the dragon. "If he's okay with you, he will move the rest of the way to let you touch him."

Tarzan nodded and I took two steps back.

Toothless no longer showed his teeth, but he did stare at the Ape Man suspiciously.

After a pause, the dragon stretched his neck forward a little and sniffed at the man's hand. His eye twitched and he wiggled his nose. Toothless let out a low growl between his teeth as he turned promptly away.

He warmed up a spot for himself under a nearby tree and settled himself down.

I stepped up to Tarzan. "Sorry, just give him some time to warm up to you. He'll come around."

He nodded.

All three of us turned to look up at the tree house when we heard a woman's voice. "Tarzan, what's going on?" The woman slowly made her way down the tree and came over to join us. "Who is this?"

"This is Hiccup," Tarzan said, pointing to me and then over to the dragon, "and that's Toothless. They are having some problems at home right now. I told them they could stay with us for a while."

"Yeah, you're welcome to stay as long as you want," she said to me. "I'm Jane."

I nodded and gave her a smile. "Thanks for letting us stay here."

"Sure, it's no problem. We . . ." she had turned to get a better look at Toothless. "What is . . .?"

"Dragon," Tarzan and I answered at the same time.

"Dragon?"

"You guys really don't have dragons around here?"

Jane slowly shook her head, not taking her eyes off of Toothless.

"He's not dangerous," I told her, giving a little shrug. "You just have to be careful when you approach him for the first time . . . and there are a couple other trigger points you will want to be aware of."

"Like what?" Jane asked, finally taking her eyes off of the black form.

"Don't be carrying any weapons while he's first getting used to you . . . and no eels," I added with a little laugh. "Those are the biggest things you should be careful of."

"Got it," they said in unison.

"Oh," I said, suddenly remembering something. "Do you guys have any fabric you would be okay with me cutting up? I'll need some metal, too."

They stared at me, wondering where I was going with this.

I gestured for them to follow me as I approached Toothless.

The dragon looked up at us with his big, round eyes at our advance. Jane and Tarzan stopped a couple feet back to be safe.

I bent down and moved his tail around so they could see the damage to the tail fin.

"He lost half of his tail when we first met. I made him a new one with fabric and metal." I explained. I then pointed out the bent metal strips, indicting where the incident happened. "Lightning struck us on our way out of Berk. He won't be able to fly until I get it fixed."

"My father might be able to help," Jane spoke up. "We can talk to him about it."

I got to my feet. "Great! Let's go!" Then, my stomach growled.

Tarzan smiled. "Why don't we get lunch first?"

I smiled shyly, a little embarrassed. "Sounds good," I nodded in Toothless's direction. "He's probably hungry too. Do you have any fish we can give him?"

"I'll get some," Tarzan answered, and then leaped into the air, grabbed hold yet another vine, and scurried up it. Leaping from tree to tree, soon he was out of view.

Jane smiled at me. "We have some fruit inside."

I nodded. "You coming, bud?"

He turned away from me, resting his head on his paws.

"I'll take that as a no," I murmured to myself as I followed after Jane. "Behave yourself," I called to him over my shoulder.

Next thing I knew, I was sitting on a couch in the tree house waiting for Jane to bring over the fresh fruit.

As she was preparing the food, I caught her up with why I was here asking for their help.

"What are your parents doing about the situation at home?" Jane asked, as she set the bowl on the table between us.

I reached into the container and pulled out a banana. "My dad is talking to the Vikings. He's trying to work things out with them." I paused, taking a bite of the food. "My mom . . . she passed away a couple years ago."

Jane frowned. "Sorry. I know what it's like to lose a parent. My mom died when I was a kid too."

I stared at the half eaten banana in my hands. I hesitated before continuing, "That's when things started to change for me."

She looked up. "What do you mean?"

I shrugged slightly. "I have been considered a nuisance for most of my life. Everyone would always complain about me getting in the way and saying that I was always causing trouble."

Jane took a bite of her fruit and nodded. "I know what you mean. I was considered different growing up."

"You?"

She nodded. "I feel like I can be myself here." We heard a thump come from the deck, but Jane ignored it. "But I grew up in London. In civilization there are certain things you are expected to do and if you don't follow the crowd you will be labeled as weird or different. I hated that. I hated being told what to wear, how to act . . . That wasn't me. I'm a lot happier here."

"Growing up with the gorillas wasn't easy either." Jane and I turned to see Tarzan entering the room. He scampered over to us on his hands. "I would always have to try harder to keep up with the family . . . and Kerchak wasn't easy to win over."

"Kerchak?" I asked.

"He was Tarzan's adopted father," Jane explained.

Tarzan continued with his story, "The only reason I was allowed to stay in the herd was because Kala; my mother, talked him into letting me stay."

I finished my banana and set the peel aside. I reached into the bowl to grab something else to eat.

I turned to Tarzan. "Did you feed Toothless?"

"He's eating now." Tarzan took out a piece of fruit for himself and settled into one of the chairs to eat.

As we ate, Tarzan told me stories about what it was like growing up here in the jungle. To me, the whole thing seemed pretty exciting.

Doing nothing but climbing trees and swinging on vines all day. And then there was the fact that he was now the leader of the herd. The human in the group ended up growing up to become their protector. If Tarzan could overcome all that he did, then I shouldn't have much trouble taking over Berk after my dad.

"You ready to go see my father?" Jane asked when we had finished eating. "We should get started on making that new tail fin."

"Yeah," I responded, getting to my feet.

Jane picked up the bowl and headed to the kitchen to throw away the trash. I headed out the door and started down the tree to check on Toothless.

The dragon seemed to be in better mood now. He was chasing a bird around on the ground. His ears were pricked up and eyes wide open, as he'd pounce. I laughed as the bird flew away before he could trap the creature between his paws.

Toothless turned at the sound and raced towards me. He slowed as he neared and nudged me playfully with his head.

"Hey, bud," I smiled, giving him a scratch under the chin. "You seem to be feeling better."

He made a purring sound in agreement.

Soon after, Tarzan and Jane joined us and we headed out to find the Professor.

In the short journey from the tree house to where Jane's father was living was filled once again with new sounds, smells, and sights. A giant snake slithered past us and a monkey screeched as he studied us from a tree.

After walking for a couple minutes, we came to a clearing in the jungle that I assumed was used as Professor Porter's workstation.

Pushed to one side of the clearing were boxes, chests, crates, and other containers stacked on top of each other. On the other side there were several tables and desks lined up next to each other. These were covered with notebooks, pens, and pencils. There were also what appeared to be different shaped glass containers. Some were skinny and tall. Some would have a fat bottom that became skinny at the spout. There was some that were shaped like bottles and many, many more.

Standing at one of these tables; pouring a light blue liquid from one of the glass tubes into another, was a short man with white hair and a big mustache. He was wearing orange shorts and a white button down

shirt.

He seemed to be too engrossed in his work to notice our approach.

When he finished pouring the liquid into the other container, he moved his hand in quick little circles stirring the fluid. He made a sound of glee.

"Fascinating!" He shouted, as he moved over to write something in one of the notebooks.

Jane drew closer to the man. "Daddy?"

"Jane, dear!" The man exclaimed. "Come here, come here! You must see this!"

As Jane headed over to see what her father was working on, Tarzan took me over to one of the chests. Inside, it was filled with different colored fabric. Each pattern was rolled around pieces of cardboard.

"Will any of this work for the tail?" He asked, as we started to shift through the cloth.

I studied some of the fabric. "These will be perfect."

As I was shifting through the cloth, I found one that was covered in nothing but yellow daisies. Holding up the fabric, I turned around to face Toothless. "What do you think, bud?"

Toothless cocked his head to the side; ears flattened on his head, he narrowed his eyes at me as if to say, "No way are you putting that on me."

I laughed at his expression and turned to put the cloth back in the trunk.

"Good heavens!" The short man proclaimed. Evidently, he had just noticed Toothless. His eyes were wide in astonishment. "What on earth?"

"It's a dragon, daddy. He's Hiccup's friend," she said gesturing in my direction.

The old man walked around the table and started to head over to us. "A dragon, you say?"

Toothless was sitting up on his back legs, head up in curiosity, and his eyes were big and round again.

"Amazing! Where did it come from?"

"He lives with me in Berk." I explained.

"Berk?" he asked, turning to me with a look of confusion.

"It's a small Viking village. Dragons are very common where I'm from," I said as Toothless slowly approached the Professor and gave him a sniff.

The man laughed at the dragon's curiosity. "What a magnificent creature!"

Compared to the Night Fury's reaction to Tarzan when they first met, I was surprised at how fast he seemed to take to the Professor.

The man turned to look at me. "What are you guys doing here?" he asked.

Jane came over to join us. "They need your help. The dragon lost half of his tail fin a while back and Hiccup had made him a new one."

"A prosthetic tail? For a dragon?" He seemed amused at this. "You made that yourself, dear boy?"

"Yeah, I work as a Blacksmith in Berk. I just used the materials we had on hand. Other than that, it was just a bunch of trial and error till I got something that worked," I shrugged. It didn't seem that astonishing to me. I was inventing new things all the time.

"The fabric got electrocuted in the storm last night. They need help getting it fixed." Jane explained.

"Toothless can't fly without it. He's a sitting duck," I added.

"Toothless?" the man asked, scratching the dragon under the chin. The Night Fury let out a meow of approval; in the process the Professor got a look inside the dragon's mouth. "Why, this beast has teeth!"

"But he has the ability to move his teeth in and out of his gums," I explained with some hand gestures.

"Really?!" He exclaimed. "Fascinating!" He added under his breath. "Can I see it?"

I moved up to stand next to Toothless. "What do you think, bud? You want to show them?"

My friend made a low purring sound as Jane, Tarzan, and the Professor gathered around to get a look at Toothless as he preformed his little trick.

"That's incredible!"

I was really starting to like these people.

"Why, enough of this," stated the old man, clapping his hands together. "Let's get to work at that tail!"

We ended up using a dark blue fabric that didn't have any patterns on it.

The Professor let me borrow one of his notebooks so I could write down the measurements that we needed to cut for the tail.

Jane knew they had metal bars in one of the boxes on the side of the clearing, so she and Tarzan went to start searching for them.

Once I had the measurements ready, the Professor took the fabric and started to make small marks on the cloth so we'd know where to cut.

By then, Jane and Tarzan had found the metal. It was a little thicker than Toothless was used too, but it would have to do for now.

That's when we ran into a problem. Not only was the metal thicker than normal, but it was also too long. They didn't have most of the equipment that I have back at my workstation at home. How were we going to cut the metal?

Jane took over with cutting the fabric while the Professor, Tarzan, and I started to experiment with trying to use fire to melt the metal apart.

It had worked for me at home when I needed another method, but the result always led to the ends of the metal not being flat and smooth. Instead, the melted edges tended to start to warp and caused hooked ends.

While all this was going on, Toothless had been switching between chasing the wild life in the clearing and resting under any of the nearby trees. At the moment, he was cuddled up under a tree in the shade watching us.

Tarzan was busy digging through the trunks again to try and find something to cut off the ends.

He was able to find a handsaw and they decided to give that a try.

It worked well enough, but the edges still weren't as smooth as I would have liked. It would have to do.

By then, Jane had the fabric ready to go.

They brought all of the materials that they had gotten together over to one of the tables and I got to work with attaching everything together so that it would be in working condition for my friend.

I then called Toothless over to get him ready to be strapped with his new tail.

Like usual, the dragon had trouble staying still for me.

"Calm down, bud," I said as I straddled his tail to keep it still in order to get the old, damaged prosthetic off of him and tossed it aside for now.

Tarzan brought the new, finished tail fin over to me.

I strapped it into place and attached it to the thin strip that ran up to the foot pedals so I could control it.

"There," I said as I stood up and moved out of the way before Toothless could whack me in the face. "How does that feel?"

The dragon turned his head and moved his tail around in the air

trying to get used to the weight of it.

I nodded slowly and folded my arms across my chest. "Heavier than normal," I noted, understanding what the dragon was testing. "Sorry bud. It's the best we can do for now."

By now, the sun was starting to sink in the sky.

"We should get back to the tree house before dark," Jane stated.

Tarzan nodded in agreement.

"Okay," Toothless and I started to follow them out of the clearing. "Thanks for your help," I called back to the Professor over my shoulder and he waved in farewell.

With Toothless's habit of warming up the ground before settling down to sleep, I figured it would be best if he spent the night outside. I didn't want him causing a fire inside the tree house.

After saying goodnight to the dragon, I followed Jane and Tarzan into the tree.

Jane got me a pillow and blankets and set up a place for me on the couch.

"Will this be okay?" she asked.

I reassured her that this was fine and thanked them again for everything they had done for me.

They then retired to their room for the remainder of the night.

I was completely exhausted after the day's events. I assumed that I would fall straight to sleep, but it didn't turn out that way. All I could think about was what was going on back home. Was my dad able to calm down the village? Would Toothless be allowed back on Berk? Should we head home tomorrow or would it be better to stay awhile longer?

These questions and more kept running through my head. I stayed up half the night tossing and turning.

At about one in the morning, I finally got to sleep from pure exhaustion.

Morning came far too quickly.

I was awakened by the sun blaring into my face. I blinked a couple times trying to get my eyes adjusted to the light.

As I slowly sat up, I realized there was someone in the kitchen. Jane was in there preparing breakfast.

"Good morning," Jane greeted, when she saw I was up. "How did you sleep?"

"Fine," I lied. "Where's Tarzan?"

"He's getting fish for Toothless," she explained and set down the bowl of fruit.

She took out a banana for herself before heading to the deck.

I grabbed a mango, before heading out after her and to check on Toothless.

Jane was already heading down the rope when I came out.

I put the mango in between my teeth to free my hands and followed her down.

Toothless's ears perked up when he saw me and ran over. I smiled and petted his head.

Tarzan landed a couple minutes later with a basket full of fish.

Apparently starving, the dragon quickly turned away from me and headed over to the basket, sticking his head in.

Leaving the Night Fury to his meal, Tarzan almost seemed to hop over to us on all fours. "So, what are you going to do? Are you going to try going home today?"

I shrugged. "I don't know. I don't want to go back too soon and find out the villager's are still upset." I said, as I watched Toothless. I couldn't risk losing him. Not after everything we'd been through.

Tarzan nodded in understanding. "You should probably test out his new tail before deciding. Make sure the extra weight isn't a problem."

He made a good point. I didn't want to make the decision to head home and then discover that Toothless couldn't handle the new weight of the prosthetic. We'd just end up falling back into the ocean.

As soon as Toothless and I had finished eating, Tarzan lead the two of us to a clearing where we would be able to practice flying with the new tail without worrying about hitting any branches on the way up.

The environment was beautiful here. Right in front of me there was a huge lake and to one side there was a tower of rocks that came together to form a waterfall. Light seemed to be bouncing off the surface of the water.

The scene was breath taking.

"Wow," before I could say anything else, Toothless ran past me and dived into the water.

I laughed at the scene and settled down in the grass.

Tarzan soon came over to join me, lying down in the sun.

"You and Toothless seem really close." He commented, as we watched the dragon come up for air. He shook his head back and fore to get

the water out of his eyes before going back under, out of view.

"It wasn't always this way," I said, mindlessly picking at the grass.

I caught Tarzan's eyes looking at me.

"Not that long ago, Vikings and dragons were constantly at war with each other."

He seemed amazed at this idea. "But, you and Toothless seem so happy together. I can't imagine you guys ever being at war."

Thinking back, it was hard to believe how far the people of Berk had come in just a couple months.

"There was a time when I wanted nothing more than to join the other Vikings in killing dragons."

Tarzan studied my face, wondering if I was joking or not. "You?"

I nodded slowly, staring at my hand as I continued to play with the grass. "It's my fault Toothless can't fly anymore."

I could feel Tarzan's eyes staring at me. I couldn't bring myself to meet his eyes.

"I used a machine to shoot him out of the sky. His tail was damaged in the fall."

Without looking up, I could see Tarzan moving into a sitting position. "What happened?"

I looked over at the dragon. He seemed to really be enjoying his swim.

I took a deep breath before continuing. "When I found where he landed . . . at first I thought he was dead. I thought I had killed my first dragon and initially I was excited." I finally turned to face Tarzan. "That's what life used to be all about in Berk. Who could kill the biggest dragon? Who could kill the most? It was contest. Sport." I went back to focusing on the grass. "Then, he moved. The first dragon I brought down was still alive. I was going to kill him then . . . but I saw the look in his eyes." I looked up at Tarzan. "He was scared. I could see how much pain he was in." I paused before continuing. I looked up in time to see Toothless climbing out of the water. He paused to shake himself dry like a dog and then came over to lie beside me, putting his head in my lap. "He was like me. I could feel it. He didn't really belong anywhere either. So . . . I freed him. I cut the ropes and I let him go."

Tarzan didn't say anything for a while, then "Now your village is at peace with the dragons? You changed that?"

I shook my head and put a hand on the dragon's head. "We changed that . . . and trust me, my dad was not an easy one to win over."

We were silent for a while.

Tarzan laid back down on the soft grass.

I scratched Toothless behind his ears, on top of his head, under his chin. He seemed to be enjoying the attention.

"Come on," I said after a while, lightly pushing the dragon's head off my lap. "We should try out that new tail."

Toothless instantly sat up straight at this, excited at the prospect of being back in the air.

I got to my feet and Toothless turned so I could get on his back . . and we were off.

I wanted to make this a quick flight. I just wanted to make sure everything was working okay. If something started to go wrong, I wanted to be able to land quickly.

Taking off was fine. Toothless soared up and was over the trees in no time. He then started to level out and we just coasted in the air for a while.

I made sure to pay attention to Toothless and how he acted during the flight.

My biggest concern was that the new tail fin was going to be heavier than he was used to; due to the metal bars that were thicker than what we had at home, but he seemed to do okay with it.

I had just decided to turn and head back to the clearing when it happened.

I gently nudged Toothless. "Let's head back, bud."

The Night Fury started to lean to the right in order to make the turn. In the process, the prosthetic fin would have to pull up a little over the right fin. The weight of the iron made it difficult for Toothless to perform the move.

This left the dragon's front half leaning to the right; starting to make the turn, but the tail was still at the appropriate angle to fly straight.

I quickly tried to move the tail fin with the pedal under my foot, but it wasn't working.

Toothless let out screech and my heart skipped a beat before he moved to level himself out again.

I took a deep breath. "Okay," I said, my voice shaking a little. "Note to self, be careful turning."

The dragon shrieked in agreement, obviously still uneasy from the experience.

In the end, we just circled around making the turn gradually.

It wasn't long before we were back on the ground in the same clearing where we had taken off.

Tarzan was still there, but now he was in the company of Jane.

Jane greeted us. "How did it go?"

I jumped off of Toothless's back. "Pretty good. Just one problem." I went on to explain to them what had happened.

"Is there anything we can do about that?" Tarzan asked.

"I don't think so," I answered putting a hand on the dragon's head. "It should be fine. We just need it to get home. I can make another one when we get back."

Just then, a bird flew by and before I could stop him Toothless was off.

"Let him go," I told Tarzan when he was about to chase after him.

I settled back down in the grass, leaning against a tree.

I watched as Toothless took off running one way down the clearing after the bird. When the bird turned and started back along the field Toothless had to shuffle his feet to try and stop his advance. He would then push off again back across the field.

It wasn't long before Jane and Tarzan came over to join me.

As Toothless continued to get rid of his energy, I started to pick at the leaves and twigs that had gotten stuck in my prosthetic leg.

"How did you get yours?"

"What?" I asked, turning towards Tarzan.

"The prosthetic leg? What happened?"

I pulled out the last leaf from the attachment. "The Red Death."

"The what?"

I pointed at Toothless as he took off again. "Toothless is a Night Fury. The Red Death is another breed of dragon." I explained. "Me and one of my friends, Astrid, we found out that the reason the dragons were attacking our village to begin with was to get to our food supply. The fish. If the dragons didn't bring enough food back to the Red Death, they would be killed." I gestured towards Toothless again. "That's how I was able to convince my dad that we don't need to hurt the dragons. I was able to show him that Toothless and I could work together to bring down the Red Death." I shook my head as I thought back to that day. "I mean . . . this dragon was huge! Toothless and I took it down."

"So, how did that happen?" Jane jumped in, pointing at the leg.

I shook my head again. "I don't know exactly," I answered. "During the battle, I fell off of Toothless . . . there was fire everywhere . . . I saw Toothless flying towards me and then . . ." I trailed off. "When I woke up, this leg was where my leg should have been."

There was a silence that seemed to drift over the group. No one seemed to know how to respond to that.

Toothless had finally giving up on the bird chase and had paddled back into the lake for another swim.

Not seeming to know what else to do, Tarzan got up and ran off to join Toothless for a swim.

This was followed by an awkward silence between Jane and I.

"So, who is this Astrid you mentioned?" Jane finally asked, in a knowing voice.

I could feel my face growing red. "Is it that obvious?"

She let out a little laugh. "Does she know you like her?"

I thought about that for a sec. "I think so . . ." I said slowly. "I mean . . . she did kiss me after the battle with the Red Death, but nothings happened since then."

Jane watched Tarzan for a couple minutes in silence. "Maybe she's waiting for you to make the next move."

I looked up at her in surprise. "You think?"

She shrugged. "You just told me that she has kissed you."

I turned back to watch Toothless and Tarzan in the lake and thought about what Jane had just said. Was that what was going on? Was she waiting for me to come to her? I needed to get back to Berk.

"I think we should go," I said, getting to my feet. "Toothless!" I called out to the dragon. "Come on, bud. We should get home."

At the mention of home, the dragon scampered out of the water and headed over to me.

"Are you sure it's okay to head back now? What about the Vikings in your village?" Tarzan asked.

I could see the worry on his face. We had become friends and just the short amount of time that we'd been here. I could tell he was worried for our safety.

I really didn't think we would have a problem anymore. "The storm should have passed over Berk by now. My dad has been working on calming everyone down. I'm sure it was just the fear of the moment that got them all worked up in the first place." I looked over at Toothless. "It's time we headed back."

"Just be careful getting home with that tail," Jane reminded me.

I nodded. "Thank your father again for me, will you?"

"Of course."

"And thanks again for letting us stay here," I said to Tarzan. "I don't know what we would have done if you hadn't helped us."

"Of course," he nodded. "You are welcome back here anytime. Toothless, too." He said, putting a hand on the dragon's head.

That was the first time Toothless had let Tarzan touch him without freaking out. I smiled at the scene before walking over to my best friend.

I waved goodbye to my new friends before climbing onto Toothless's back.

I was going to miss these guys. I promised myself that we would come back to visit sometime before taking off and heading for home.

There was someone I desperately wanted to talk to.

End
file.